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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 165479

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: URGING THE EC TO SEND PAKISTAN ELECTION OBSERVER  
MISSION

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 4992  
[1](#)B. SCA BUREAU/USEU EMAILS

Classified By: A/S Richard A. Boucher, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) This is an urgent action request. Department requests the United States Mission to the European Union convey key points (see paragraph 8) at the earliest opportunity and at the highest appropriate level to the Commissioner's Office.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Pakistan will hold country-wide parliamentary elections on January 8, 2008. The European Commission now appears likely to cancel plans for a full election observer mission, opting instead for a small and low-profile assessment team. The United States believes the European Commission's observer mission is a critical element to the election's credibility and that canceling its deployment could significantly damage larger efforts by the international community to help create conditions for credible elections in Pakistan. End Summary.

#### Background

[1](#)3. (SBU) The European Commission's effort was slated to be the largest independent election observer mission in Pakistan (12 coordinators, 50 long-term observers and 50 short-term observers). A cancellation of that mission may motivate European Union and non-European Union countries (Japan, Norway, Switzerland) to cancel their election observer efforts.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Our Mission in Pakistan is working to increase the number of observers from its own mission and that of U.S.-sponsored international observers. Department is funding an additional 3,500 short-term domestic observers (part of a group of 20,000) working through the Asia Foundation. The European Commission mission is sorely needed to ensure the credibility of the upcoming election.

#### Credible Elections a Key Step for Pakistan

[1](#)5. (U) To date, European and U.S. actions and statements during Pakistan's state of emergency have largely reinforced one another. Both have urged the government to end emergency rule; release political prisoners and activists; reinstate media and political freedoms; and hold credible elections on schedule. American and European pressure has yielded results: The Pakistani government has released most detained activists and opposition members; relaxed restrictions on the media; and allowed opposition political figures to file nomination papers. President Musharraf's resignation as Chief of Pakistan's Army was another step in the right direction, and the recent return of Pakistan's two most popular civilian leaders, former Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, will likely broaden participation in the parliamentary elections.

¶6. (SBU) Despite these signs of progress toward normalcy, many concerns remain. The United States and Europe should continue to urge the Pakistani government to end emergency rule on December 15 (as Musharraf has promised), allow transmission of still-banned GEO television, release remaining detainees, and take other steps toward civilian democracy and constitutional normalcy. The January 8 election is the next benchmark in Pakistan's progress toward civilian democracy; the United States and Europe can and should play an important role in ensuring the election's credibility.

¶7. (SBU) Department appreciates the U.S. Mission to the European Union's initiative and on-going work on this matter. Below are key points to convey:

-- Pakistan will hold country-wide parliamentary elections on January 8, 2008, and we believe international observers are a critical element to the election's credibility.

-- Therefore, we strongly urge the European Commission to go forward with a robust election observer mission, not just the smaller "assessment" group now being discussed.

-- A European Commission decision to cancel the deployment of observers could damage larger efforts by the international community, including by bilateral European missions, to create conditions for credible elections in Pakistan.

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-- Our Mission in Pakistan will go forward with its election observer mission.

-- To date, European and U.S. actions and statements during Pakistan's state of emergency have largely reinforced one another. Both have urged the government to end emergency rule; release political prisoners and activists; reinstate media and political freedoms; and hold credible elections on schedule.

-- Department believes part of American and European efforts must be aimed at ensuring, to the best of our ability, credible elections in January.

-- The European Commission's effort was slated to be the largest independent observer mission in Pakistan (12 coordinators, 50 long-term observers and 50 short-term observers).

-- A cancellation by the Commission may motivate European Union as well as non-European Union countries (Japan, Norway, Switzerland) to cancel.

-- The United States appreciates the European Union's continuing engagement with Pakistan and strongly encourages support for these and all efforts to make Pakistan's elections as credible as possible.

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